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Teachers can help students to understand, retain, and relate to what is taught in a Social Studies class by selecting television shows, novels, films, and plays which broaden the students' environment beyond their personal experience. Several events in American History can be made more stimulating by the use of novels to present vivid pictures of happenings. For example, "Last of the Mohicans" and "Northwest Passage" can help students to experience scenes of exploration and early settlement; and "Gone With the Wind" and "The Red Badge of Courage" present accounts of the Civil War. (A selected list of novels for use in Social Studies classes, and criteria for the selection and use of fiction are provided.) (SW)

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Armor dented, hope undaunted, Richard Kiley as the **Man of La Mancha** sings his impossible dreams. The star of the current off-Broadway hit was photographed by Bob Golby.

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A NOVEL Approach To Social Studies

by Alexander M. Butman

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WHAT IS THE BASIC OBJECTIVE of the general Social Studies curriculum? Primarily, we are trying to give the student an understanding of the story of man and the history of our civilization in a context that he can personally relate to. But when we structure the curriculum and plan the course (geography, physical factors, historical and chronological sequence, social change, political change, economic modification, variations in climate and natural phenomena, technical advance, social mores, to mention only some study areas), we segment the whole into separate parts for the student's ease of learning. Too often we forget to put them all back together into a *total* picture.

It is just this exposure to the *whole* situation which makes it possible for the student to *really* understand the event. The word "understand" is key. If the student learns all the "facts" about the colonists, the people, the places, the dates, the events, the "true and false" test items, he most likely will *not* actually understand, on a personal basis, very much about them. "Textbook students" do *not* generally associate with the life and times of the past. They learn "items" with which they have no feeling of connection. Like students learning nonsense syllables, they have trouble assimilating and retaining information that has no personal meaning. On the other hand, students seem to more fully comprehend people and events that they can associate with or that they have actually lived through or experienced.

Few students of today will ever forget the total picture, both historically and socially, of the fateful assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. The news, TV coverage and personal national reaction were things they saw and felt in their own life experience. They went through the emotional experience of "being there." By the use of good fiction and dramatization of events past (and present), we can broaden the student's personal experience beyond the limits of his direct environment. Good fiction, television shows, films and plays are usually better tools for communicating the past than even journals, diaries and other prime source material. These media have an innate ability for communication by feeling and impact, involving us almost instantly.

The survey nature of the course is minimized when using novels. For example, in a course in American History you could highlight about ten to twelve periods by using *novels*, between which you would intersperse the regular text material.

It is not the purpose of this article to be a definite book list or bibliography. However, the following examples will serve to demonstrate the types of novels which could significantly enlighten and enrich students of Social Studies.

Age of Exploration and Settlement

Last Of The Mohicans (several editions avail.), *Northwest Passage* (Crest 95¢).

Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary Period

The Strong Men (Ace 50¢), *Johnny Tremain* (Riv Lit $1.25), *April Morning* (Bantam 50¢), *Light in the Forest* (Bantam 50¢), *Drums Along the Mohawk* (Bantam 75¢).

New England

The Scarlet Letter (several editions avail.), *Look To The Mountain* (Bantam 60¢), *The Crucible* (Play) (Bantam 60¢).

Alexander M. Butman has taught English and American History and was a visiting lecturer in American Foreign Policy. He was Educational Director for a large paperback publishing house and a member of the Executive Committee at the Columbia Teachers College Conference on Paperbacks. Mr. Butman is Director of Paperback Programs, American Education Publications, a subsidiary of Xerox Corporation.

Virginia
The Great Meadow (Signet 50¢).

War of 1812
Captain From Connecticut (Bantam 50¢).

Westward Expansion and the Railroad
The Oregon Trail (Signet 60¢), *The Way West* (Pocket Books 50¢), *The Light In The Forest* (Bantam 50¢), *The Octopus* (Bantam 75¢), *Shane* (Bantam 50¢), *Travels of Jaimie McPheeters* (Pocket Books 75¢), *The Ox-bow Incident* (Signet 60¢), *Giants in the Earth* (Perennial 95¢), *The Virginian* (Popular Library 50¢).

The Civil War
Gone With The Wind (Pocket Books 95¢), *The Red Badge Of Courage* (SEA) *Banners at Shenandoah* (Bantam 60¢), *Across Five Aprils* (Tempo, 50¢).

World War I
All Quiet On The Western Front (Crest 60¢), *The Young Lions* (movie or TV only).

The 20's and 30's
The Grapes Of Wrath (Bantam 95¢), *It Can't Happen Here* (Dell 60¢), *All The King's Men* (Cliff $1.00), *Looking Backward* (Signet 60¢), *An American Tragedy* (Signet 95¢), *Inherit the Wind* (Bantam 50¢).

World War II
Run Silent, Run Deep (Pocket Books 50¢), *The Guns Of Navarone* (Washington Square Press 60¢), *A Bell For Adano* (Bantam 60¢), *The Wall* (Pocket Books 75¢), *Sink The Bismarck* (Bantam 45¢), *The Moon Is Down* (Bantam 50¢), *The Bridge Over The River Kwai* (Bantam 50¢), *The Caine Mutiny* (Dell 95¢), *The Raft* (Pyramid 45¢), *The Cruel Sea* (Pocket Books 75¢).

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SOCIAL STUDIES

(continued from page 17)

After the World War, the Bomb, and Cold War
Fail Safe (Dell 75¢), *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (Bantam 50¢), *The Ugly American* (Crest 60¢), *Seven Days In May* (Bantam 95¢), *Advise And Consent* (Pocket Books 95¢), *On The Beach* (Perennial 60¢), *1984* (Signet net 75¢), *Alas, Babylon* (Bantam 60¢), *Animal Farm* (Signet 75¢), *Brave New World* (Bantam 75¢).

These are only a few of literally hundreds that you can use. Excellent lists are available such as: THE PAPERBACK GOES TO SCHOOL (BIPAD, 122 E. 42 Street, New York, New York).

Great care must be taken in the selection of the novels and I should like to suggest the following criteria for selection and use.

1. Make sure the book is *available*.
2. Select only novels that are *historically accurate* and deal *directly* with the subject selected. Read it, yourself!
3. Do *not* use novels which are simply set in a period but which do not adequately describe the life and events of the period.
4. Make sure that the novels are within the *reading level* and *comprehension* range of the student. The English Department can be of great help in advising you in this area.
5. Make sure the students read for *comprehension* and *experience* and do not become involved in the literary aspects of the works.
6. Be sure to "introduce" each novel for the students with a pre-reading discussion.
7. After reading the novel be sure to discuss it as *primary material.*
8. Make sure the student's *sophistication* is adequate for the assigned novel.

You will find that the mandatory assigning of novels as a major framework for most Social Studies courses is a rewarding experience for both student and teacher. It leaves the student with a lasting and personal understanding of events whether they be social, political, economic or historical. I could not, after teaching this way, go back to just using text material alone. For one example, what better way can one make the rise of a demagogue understandable to today's high school students than through a reading of *All the King's Men?* How better can one really involve the student in a meaningful discussion of democracy, monarchy, communism, socialism, etc., than by a class reading of *1984, Brave New World, Julius Caesar,* or *Animal Farm?*

TRYING FICTION

Sound fiction, whether in novel, play, or film form, when used to actually structure a social studies course, renders the subject real and comprehensible. Fiction makes history, political events, revolutions and social upheaval come alive! Fictionalized, even *romanticized* "historicals" contribute flesh and blood to otherwise static heroes; add excitement *and enlightenment* to dry texts and endless data and dates.

The ready availability of inexpensive paperbacks has placed this approach economically within the grasp of every school system. The wide range of material makes the curriculum flexible and dynamic. If you want to give your students an unforgettable experience rather than a quickly forgotten exegesis–try good fiction.